



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

ART. IV.—*Undercurrents of Wall Street. A Romance of Business.* By RICHARD B. KIMBALL, Author of “St. Leger,” etc. New York: G. P. Putnam. 1862.

A VERY favorable decision has been pronounced on the literary merits of this book. But there are other questions which we propose to discuss. What is its moral character, its religious character? Has it any such character? or is it positively irreligious? One thing is certain. No thoughtful man can read the book without being impressed by it. It goes below the merely imaginative or the amusing. It makes us think, and enters into our thinking. Its representations of humanity affect us deeply, and that, too, all the more for their plainness, their want of striking originality, as some might say. We feel that they are true, because they go down to those deep things in which all men are original, which no man has borrowed from another, but all derive from the primitive stock of goodness or of evil, those more interior matters in which men *agree*, in distinction from the mere surface features in which they so greatly differ. They lead us, in short, to that department of anthropology with which the Apostle was so much better acquainted than the satirist. There has been a gross misnomer here. When we speak of human nature, or a knowledge of human nature, there are almost always had in mind these surface differences. The writers who depict them most vividly, whether as casuists, satirists, or outside reformers, these are called our shrewd men, our sharp men, our keen observers of the world and man. These, it is said, show such a deep knowledge of human nature. Keen it may be, sharp it may be, but what is there *deep* about it? A day's walk in the streets of London, with a good pair of eyes well employed, will give Dickens the materials of one of his longest novels; just as a walk in the woods will give a man who has an eye for the grotesque in crooked roots, and gnarled limbs, and odd, fantastic forms of every kind, the materials for a jumbled composite picture which the astonished admirer of such oddities calls most exquisitely true and natural. Such a “natural writer” need only note every outside difference that

he meets, every eccentricity of speech or action, real or affected, and he has produced, forsooth, a perfect picture of humanity. Let each man be dressed up in the odd costume of his individuality, only caricatured to the highest possible degree, or let him have some odd phrase which he repeats on all occasions, and we are immediately in raptures with its exceeding naturalness. How true to the life! We know the man every time he appears upon the scenes; we have seen something like him in our own experience, and the recognition gives us a higher idea of our own powers of observation. And so the picture may be infinitely varied. Another man may be represented as ever canting, as never opening his mouth without proclaiming himself a hypocrite, — doing this foolishly, unmeaningly, in season and out of season, as though he were afraid the world would not believe him hypocritical enough, or might fail to see the author's design in this his favorite creation, which is, of course, the honor of "pure and undefiled religion." Another man is made so unreasonably good, that one can hardly help detesting his shallow virtue, so absurdly overflowing, without any originating fountain, either in God's grace, or in any truth of humanity. Another is represented as so inexpressibly mean, and so ever exhibiting his meanness, that the sound-minded reader, if he has any natural pity for an ill-used subject, finds himself involuntarily on the side of the poor creature; the author has made him so very mean, so absurdly mean, that he becomes the object of compassion instead of hatred. This is because we cannot help feeling that the false virtue of the one and the monstrous moral deformity of the other are both alike, without any true ground in the human constitution, whether in its natural or regenerate state. Grace never made such goodness; nature never developed such crime. There is no more reason in the one than in the other; there is no reason in either of them; and hence the reader gets a sense of injustice, which is all very natural, though the sentimentalist may regard it as very perverse. The avowal may not seem creditable either to our artistic or our moral sense, and yet we must confess an aversion to such good people as Dickens's Brothers Cheeryble, their goodness is so surfeiting; while, in spite of ourselves, we get

on the side of wicked old Ralph Nickleby, his devilism is so pitifully motiveless and extravagant. So, too, we cannot avoid a touch of sympathy for the Quilps, and the Grides, and the Smallweeds, and that miserable, canting Uriah Heap. They are not only the author's creations, but his arbitrary creations; they look so very ugly simply because he chose to put upon them such hideous masks; we know not but that their "natural faces" might be as fair, or rather no more deformed, than those of the characterless good people whose outsides he has so painted in seeming contrast; we see, in short, no reason, either within or without, — no reason in nature, education, discipline, grace, or circumstances, — why the virtue should not have been on the one side as well as on the other. The end is aimless, the goodness has no root; the proceeding is wholly arbitrary, and our sense of justice revolts against it.

The author of the "Undercurrents" exhibits, too, a knowledge of human nature, but it is of a different kind and from a different source. It is Biblical, we may say, although the book makes no show of Biblical authority, and is very far from being what is commonly, and most absurdly, called a religious novel. In other words, unlike the mere satires of Thackeray, or the caricatures of Dickens, it displays a knowledge of man grounded on the great truth that underlies the anthropology of Revelation. It is the Bible view of humanity, — severe, yet just; true, yet kindly; profound, while making no array of shrewdness or profundity. Had our satirists generally recognized the Scriptures, if only as presenting a picture of humanity, they would never have caricatured the race so horribly; they would never have employed one page to paint men as devils, worse than devils, more foolishly wicked than devils, and another to exhibit the writer's extreme aversion to that sober doctrine of human depravity which gave the noble Apostle "great heaviness and continual sorrow of heart," — that compassionate doctrine of human depravity, which, in the sense it brings of the common ruin, is the only antidote to the satirist's morbid misanthropy, — that loving doctrine of human depravity, which finds below all superficialities, and all individualities, even in the deep original sin of the race, the true

ground of human brotherhood. A state of perfect individual blessedness, although not foreign to the thought of fraternity, does not primarily suggest it. Peace, harmony, sinlessness, — they are consistent with it, they are strengthened by it, but they do not demand the social or kindred idea. We seldom think of the brotherhood of angels; there is but little of tenderness in the conception; it does not greatly move. But the human brotherhood! here is a new element; here is a thought of power. What makes it so deeply felt when felt at all? It is a community of sin, of suffering, of struggle. Higher than this, and stronger than this, it is the hope of a common salvation. The philanthropy that has not one or both of these elements is spurious; the satire that does not recognize them is the very spirit of Antichrist; the “knowledge of human nature” that ignores them is not the heavenly σοφία, but the “wisdom” of the serpent, “earthly, sensual, devilish.” “Who can understand his errors?” What human intelligence can fathom the abyss of evil in humanity, that dark profound beyond the deepest profound in nature, that vast unknown within,

“ Upon whose dizzy verge we stand appalled,
And fear to cast our swimming eyes so low.”

He alone who came from heaven to heal could know the desperateness of the disease. He alone could estimate the depth of the perdition, in the labor of the atonement, in the greatness of the redemptive work, or by what other name we may call that restoring process which was necessary for the outward judicial reinstatement, as well as the perfect inward cure, of our fallen humanity. No doctrine teaches charity like this. The worst man is only the developed representative of the evil that is in the best; the best man is only a proof of what the Divine grace or the Divine providence can do for the worst. And yet along with this deep view of the common evil we may hold what the mere casuist may regard as utterly inconsistent with it. The highest human virtue is sinful more or less; the deepest human wickedness is connected with some redeeming trait. This is simply holding that the best acts are not what they ought to be; the worst, not as bad as they might be. Our confusion has arisen from a wrong notion of

that old doctrine of "*total depravity*" which has, of late, been so much denounced, and so little understood. On both sides there has been misconception of the accurate language of the older theologians. *Total* is a term of *extensity* (we use the word for the sake of the parallel), but not of *intensity*,—of width and breadth, but not of depth. We are bad enough, doubtless, but the *degree* of badness does not enter into the logical statement of the doctrine. The word is subjective; it measures the man rather than the *amount* of his sin. He has not *all* evil, but *some* evil *everywhere*. He has not all depravity, but he is all depraved,—in thought, affections, will,—in body, soul, and spirit. Again, *total* is opposed to *partial*,—the partial in time and circumstance. It denies that man is partly good and partly bad, that he is part angel and part devil, or that he is either the one or the other. He is wholly fallen, but not out of sight of redemption. He is not one day holy and another day sinful, but *always* sinful,—not evil in one respect, and innocent in another, but *all* wrong,—wrong everywhere, wrong in everything, in "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart,"—wrong always, or as the Hebrew expressively gives it, "all the day." In nothing is he free from sin. Evil he carries ever with him wherever he goes, and into whatever he may do. "Never, never," says St. Augustine, "was I innocent." Such is the doctrine. We are not now argumentatively defending it, but only stating it as it truly is. Man is not righteous, that is, he is unrighteous,—

"In all his works and ways
Unholy and impure."

He is not "just before God; he is not clean before his Maker." Yet he is not a devil; there is not in him the utmost *intensity* of evil; he has not reached the irredeemable state; the worst man on earth, perhaps, has not arrived at that depth of depravity where he loves evil *per se*, or would say with Milton's Satan,

"Evil, be thou my good."

There is that in every man, even the worst man, that yet moves the Divine compassion, yea, more, that has yet a hold upon the Divine love.

Premising this, we are prepared for an assertion that may seem very strange, and even contradictory. We venture the paradox, that every individual man we know is worse, much worse, and at the very same time better, much better, than he appears to be. We judge him wrongly in both ways; others do the same with us. There are, indeed, great differences of manifestation; some exhibit more of the one side, some of the other; but there are very few — none, perhaps, on earth, among the holiest or the vilest — in whom the seeming paradox does not hold true.

The author of this book may not have proposed to himself any such proposition, or any such doctrine of human nature, as the guiding thought of his story, but he furnishes illustrations of it on almost every page. His good people have many faults; they are, in fact, very imperfect people, almost every one of them. On the other hand, his bad ones — if we may be even allowed to draw such a line between them — are not as bad as they might be. What is more to the purpose of our criticism, they are not unreasonably or foolishly bad, nor unreasonably or foolishly good, — that is, good or bad simply because the writer tells the reader they are so, and makes them act accordingly. The weaknesses and some of the rather doubtful acts of Parkinson; the conventional sins of mercantile life; the business virtues of the one lawyer, the business vices of the other; the narrow, selfish religionism of Golding; the suspected Wall-Street life of Downer, as compared with that most exquisite picture of his domestic worth; Harley with his “whole-souled God bless you,” and his spirit of speculation, utterly reckless of the evil it might do to himself or others; Matilda with her fierce vindictiveness; the ordinary mixture of good and bad we find in the other characters, — these all come naturally out of one common fountain of humanity, modified in its flow by outward influences, whether of fortune or discipline or that heavenly thing we call grace. It is the generic or birth-evil which is in every man, individualized by that outward education, natural or supernatural, through which, in the inscrutable providence of God’s election, one fallen child of Adam is made to differ from another equally fallen. We may remark by the way, that there is

only one character in the book that may be said to be without a fault,—pure goodness, unsullied virtue, at least as judged by the human standard. It is the wife. But she is near the grave, and weaning fast from earth. The author was artistically right in suffering no shade to fall upon that perfect picture.

But what have we here, some may say, but the old infidel “doctrine of circumstances”? Men are what education and outward influences make them to be. We admit the influence, but with a reserve that wholly changes its character. It is the “doctrine of circumstances,” but radically different from that of Owen and Fourier,—radically different from that religious indifferentism which seems to resemble it in its charity, while it directly reverses the position on which that charity is grounded. Mankind are very much alike,—here both doctrines are in harmony. Radically, human nature is one; even the outward differences, both moral and intellectual, are much less than they seem to be. So far they proceed *pari passu*. The conclusion, too, seems very much the same, if not absolutely identical, at least so far as language is concerned, in both. Seeing we are all so much alike, *therefore* we ought to be very kind, very loving, very *charitable* to one another. So say both; and yet the one conclusion must be a cheat, for, when carefully analyzed, it destroys itself. It talks of charity, but really leaves no ground for charity; it claims to be a fountain of tenderness, but its cold indifferences have no power of emotion; it talks much of evil, but really admits no evil; it has no deadly disease, and can, therefore, have no restoring cure; it acknowledges no perdition, and can, therefore, have no real *salvation*, whether we take this much misunderstood term in the sense of rescue from some impending outward evil, or in its more etymological, as well as more spiritual import, of the ultimate *salus*, σωτηρία, healing, or soul-health. We are all equally good until evil circumstances make one man worse than another. We are all equally bad until favoring circumstances—meaning by the term all helping things in nature, providence, or grace, regarded as outward to ourselves—shall make one man better than another. Without arguing here for the absolute truth of either of these views,

one must see that the difference between them is immense, both in their theoretical and in their practical aspects. The one, we say, really admits no evil. It has no real charity, for it smooths away all the dark features in which the human resemblance most strikingly consists. It can have no strong brotherhood, for it finds the evil to be relieved, the misery to be healed, the great peril in which man most needs help, to be in the ever varying, ever alienating circumstances of outward society, instead of looking for them in the very heart and root of humanity. We are all equally good, unless where the current has been turned to evil. We are all equally fallen, unless where something has checked the downward tendency, making it less downward, less evil than it would have been, or actually turned it into an upward, though resisted direction, — into a heavenward, though ever earth-impered path. It is enough to state fairly and distinctly the two views, leaving it to the thoughtful mind to judge which is the most in accordance with the most striking facts and appearances of human history, — which has most of love, of charity, of power, of struggle, of emotional life, — which has most accordance with the solemn, Scriptural declaration, “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world stand guilty before God.”

Of the human nature thus viewed as a natural, evil current mixed with an outward resisting good of disciplining circumstances, Parkinson may be regarded as an admirable average representative. He is very far from being a hero. He sets out with a predominant worldly fondness for wealth. To be rich, respectably, seems to him to be “the chief end of man.” For this pursuit he means to live a good and honest life, according to the Wall-Street standard. He sees no higher virtue around him, — nothing to awaken the conviction how far this is below the right aim of an immortal being. It is only after a long course of severe discipline that he begins to get a glimpse of this truth. He fails twice. True, he pays his debts, and preserves his mercantile idol, *credit*, though, like Dagon of old, it gets somewhat battered in the process. But he seems to have had no difficulty in his conscience as to the general morality of a business that so frequently leads to such results. He becomes very poor. He experiences the usual treatment

of the bankrupt. There is not much in his character, as it there appears, to show that he himself might not have done to others very much as his creditors did to him, when they tried to prevent losses by his failure. He would probably have been more good-natured than Golding, more kindly than Bulldog. For with some of these outside amenities he seems to have had more of a natural furnishing than they; but there is no evidence that he would have acted on any principle of religion or morality radically much higher than theirs. After his repeated bankruptcy he engages in a kind of business which, to a keen casuistry, would hardly seem defensible in all respects; but of this he appears to have no consciousness. Circumstances had driven him to such a mode of life. It might have occurred to him, that, in this note-buying and note-selling business, others, through his means, and to make his gains, small as they were, might suffer from sheriffs and Bulldogs, even as he had done. But it fell within the conventional morality of the only society with which he was familiar. He could not get out of it or above it, and so had no time to talk with his conscience about it. Besides, he was no casuist, and we must say we like him all the better for that. He seems to have had no faculty for what may be called the algebra or the differential calculus of morals, and we think him morally healthier on that very account. A man had better do some questionable things, than to be everlastingly killing his conscience by the Benthamite plus and minus solution of moral questions.

But Parkinson is fixed. He must yield to circumstances; he could not get out of Wall Street; and thus he toils on for long years, meeting with a variety of adventures, unromantic indeed, but having an interest, often higher than the most labored romance. This Wall-Street note-shaving life is a new field, a very peculiar field. It would have been thought, *a priori*, the last in which a novelist could hope to be successful. We cannot say that we fully understand its mysteries, but Mr. Kimball has certainly thrown a wonderful interest about these very dry and commonplace transactions, as they would in themselves appear. Much is owing to the quiet yet admirable way in which he tells these stories. But besides this, there is somewhere a masterly power,—we can hardly tell

what it is, — by which the reader becomes fascinated with all that relates to this Mr. Parkinson, ordinary and drudging as he seems to be. Many years of his life are spent in this hard way. Chapters are filled with his struggles to support himself and a beloved family, — his petty successes, his petty failures, all touching our compassion the more from the very fact of their pettiness, when we remember what an intensity of human feeling they may call forth within that small circle where they are the great events of the day. He fails one week in making five dollars as he had expected; he cannot fulfil some domestic arrangements; he is afraid to meet the beloved child at home, and dim her smiling eye by the confession of his straitened way. Nothing heroic here, nothing romantic, nothing very “thrilling”; but it is more than thrilling, — it touches, it moves the very quick of our hearts, — to use a very homely yet most expressive phrase, *it hurts our feelings* when we think of this petty misery, this every-day misery of our most ordinary human life.

He struggles on. Fewer and fewer are his friends; deeper and deeper sinks his poverty. Along with this there are some exceedingly rich domestic incidents. There are episodic matters very well managed, both as descriptive scenes, and in their bearing upon the winding up of the story. This proceeds so steadily, and in the main so evenly, that we find it difficult to imagine how the author will bring it out, or whether he will not simply drop the reader by the way, until at last, by a very sudden incident, striking indeed, and yet, by its extreme probability saving a vast deal of tiresome plot-developing machinery, Parkinson is made comfortable in his old age, with a character well and religiously developed by the disciplinary process through which he has passed. He becomes a true Christian, we think, though the author does not say so. It is left to the reader's religious discernment.

Now what can there be to interest us, it may be asked, in such an ordinary character, and in such a plain story as this? There is matter of the deepest interest; of that the reader may be assured. It pervades the book, not only the main, but also the episodic, or incidental, narratives. There is the striking episode of Downer, the poor Wall-Street drudge, enduring

poverty, toil, the contumacy of men who have money as he had once, suffering finally, and that undeservedly, the loss even of his Wall-Street reputation, yet laboring on for his dear world at home, and presenting a picture of domestic excellence equal to any that was ever drawn by the poet or the novelist. We have been greatly interested, fascinated we may say, with this most original, yet most ordinary, character of old Sol Downer. We should love to dwell longer upon it, but it would interfere with our main purpose. It is a very peculiar creation, all Mr. Kimball's own; for there is nothing like it in the whole range of fictitious literature. We would simply say, in passing, that the author might safely rest his literary reputation on this one admirable sketch, and the hearty, healthy, truthful interest he has succeeded in throwing about it.

We have expressed the conviction that our author is a religious man, and that his knowledge of human nature is sound, because grounded on those Scriptures which are no less a revelation of man to himself than of God to man. But this Mr. Parkinson, who is the hero, if the book had such a thing as a hero, does not seem commended to us for his piety. He has a serious fit now and then, but does not appear to be a very religious character; and there is no attempt, even after he has gone through all his hard discipline, and becomes subdued, and seems to have a new and higher life, to make him a very *remarkable* convert, detailing his experience and warning others. Moreover, there is something in him which looks rather irreligious. He is set in contrast with the *pious* man of the book, if we may so characterize him, from the stress that is laid upon his religious profession. Golding is a member of the Church; he is, moreover, an elder in the Church; he is a scrupulous attendant of the weekly prayer-meeting; he gives to missionary societies; and yet this Wall-Street representative of business and Christianity behaves very cruelly to poor Parkinson, who, though not a member of the Church, is an attendant, with his pious wife, in the same congregation. They hear the same sermons; their children go to the same Sunday school; all presents the appearance of religious and congregational respectability, until the non-professing world-

ling fails, and his more spiritual co-worshipper hurries to his lawyer for an attachment against the bankrupt's assets, and a process which will consign him to a prison.

To a superficial view it might seem that the author had an irreligious purpose here, and meant to make a kind of Dickens caricature. But clearly this is not the case. Golding is not a foolish, canting hypocrite. He is no hypocrite at all. This character in the hands of Dickens is, generally, a very absurd and superficial one. Our author gives us a deeper chapter in human nature. Golding is no hypocrite, but a fair representative of numbers who sincerely profess religion, and think they have it. They are men who at some period of their lives have had much trouble about their souls; they have been converted, or supposed themselves converted; they pray sincerely, and even fervently, though with little or no self-knowledge; they mean sincerely, in some way, to serve God; they become zealous for all good things, very conservative in the state, stanch supporters of the ministry, lovers of social order, respecters of the Sabbath, warm opponents of infidelity, diligent in business, fervent in spirit, liberal to missions, yet counting as of the very essence of Christianity the precept which requires each man to provide diligently for his own. Such a man is Golding, full of worldliness, and, it may be, having no real Christianity at all. Yet, we do not hesitate to say it, amid all this mass of pride and worldliness there may be some true faith, even though it be but the thousandth part of a grain of mustard-seed. There may be some good grain taking root among these thorns, and on this stony ground; there may be some little religion, some heavenly grace, just living on in that deformed spiritual growth, and which may yet be to it, when disciplined and better brought out, the seed of everlasting life. He is no hypocrite; we do not think the author meant to paint him so. He is a very poor Christian, — perhaps no Christian at all, — and yet a seeker of salvation in his poor, blind, selfish way. He may not be wholly self-deluded even, but a man whose native depravity, which he shares with all, had, through conventional circumstances, presented an unusually deformed appearance, while his grace, if he had any, had been greatly checked and

stified in its development. To take John Bunyan's panorama of the race, we might regard even Golding as some sort of pilgrim to the New Jerusalem, — as a man terribly diseased indeed, yet striving to get away from the city of the plague, — stumbling when he cannot run, and crawling when he cannot walk, — making very poor work of it indeed, and yet better than the man who moves not at all, and who, while equally worldly, counts it as his great virtue that he makes no profession, that he is no hypocrite. We do not know that it is the emotion which the author designed to produce in his reader, but we must say that we feel sorry for Golding, without meaning to confess any sympathy with hypocrites. Perhaps, if he had had the failures and the discipline of Parkinson, he would have been nearly as good a man as he. We should like to have put in a supplementary chapter describing a meeting between the two, the hard professor and his non-professing debtor, — the one, through the teaching of adversity, brought to see his wrong and make confession, the other led to feel that there might be some spark of a better life even in the man of whom his judgment had been so severely just. But this would have required the author's powers of painting to make it effective, and even then it might have deformed the plot and marred the artistic proportion of the work.

There is clearly no irreligious intent in the picture drawn of these two characters. Quite the contrary is evident, both in the management and the result. Parkinson, the man who makes no profession, is not set in contrast with the hard professor, with an attempt, constantly manifested, to represent the honesty of the one as better than the religion of the other. That is the way Dickens would have treated the matter; but Mr. Kimball does no such thing. There is one very natural scene, where the hard-pressed bankrupt stands before his exacting creditor in the prayer-meeting, and disturbs the placidity of his petitions. Parkinson's motive in this is not at all of the pious kind, and some may say that it has a very irreligious look; but evidently there is no such purpose. The injured man acts thus in a fit of desperation. It is done, not to show his hostility to religion, or to a religious profession, but to confound Golding. He becomes conscious himself that the

indulgence of such feelings is greatly hurting his own moral constitution, and the scene that follows, where his Christ-like wife so gently, yet so piously, reproves him for his moody vindictiveness, is one of the finest in the book. We may say here, in passing, that this picture, and the one that soon follows, of the wife's decline and death, possess the highest order of moral and artistic excellence. It is a Christian scene such as Dickens never painted, when with her dying breath she commends to God her poor bankrupt husband, concerned as she is for his loss of property, and the hard destitution with which she leaves him to struggle, but still more for the peril that may thence result to his moral and religious life.

“Charles, *it is coming*; we have little to say to each other, for our whole life has been rounded from day to day by love. I leave you to encounter misery and degradation, and what shall seem disgrace; but through all preserve your integrity, and at the last there will come a season of repose. God permits me to see this, and to tell you, O my husband!’ After a pause, she continued: ‘I have one request to make’;—her voice trembled. ‘Keep them together. Keep them all around you. Promise me you will not separate.’

“‘Never! while I have life, never!’ I murmured.

“‘Kiss me: call the children!’

“She died that evening.”

Like a master artist, the author gives the most simple and touching outlines. He does not spoil it by overdoing. He says just enough to make us linger over the page which is so suggestive, until it becomes absolutely painful through the desire it creates to enjoy, again and again, the fascination of its exquisite finish.

Parkinson is a very imperfect man. He is far from answering, or being intended, as the type of the *moral* in distinction from the religious man. But, with all his imperfections, there is one thing that attaches the reader to him, although at first we hardly know how it is, or why it is. It is not merely his hardships and his brave endurance. It is not his honesty in his Wall-Street business, for that is conventional, and sometimes questionable; it is about as high as prevails in the sphere he has chosen; and the author evidently claims no merit, and no great sympathy for him, in that respect. We would call it

his spiritual honesty. The term needs defining. By spiritual honesty, then, we may understand, not honesty in the business or social relations of life, but that state of soul which is honest to itself,—which will not think of itself, nor seek to have others think of it, other than it really is, so far as it does and can know itself. It may be consistent with a very imperfect state in other respects. It may be a partner with many frailties, faults, and even sins, to which we would give a darker name. It may exist in the midst of much self-ignorance. Yet, if there is any one native trait in man pleasing to God,—in other words, if there be any native human virtue, it is this: perfect honesty of spirit, in that it seeks not to cover from God, or from itself, anything in itself, be its moral condition what it may. It would have its *being* and its *appearing* the same, however much it might be dissatisfied with itself, or feel that its *being* ought to be something different from what it *is*. It would not be what it is not. But here we must explain again; for this is a department of our moral psychology that requires great carefulness of language. We *ought* to be what we *are* not. Let us amend, then, by saying, that a soul may seek to *be* what it is not, without the process of *becoming* it; it may be greatly averse to such becoming. It would pass from evil to good by some other road than that conflict which is inseparable from the passage. It would fancy the transition made, and, since there is in all men an abstract admiration of righteousness, it would talk to itself, and to its Maker, as though it were made, when really there had not been the movement of a hair's breadth from the old *status*. It wants the soft, melting feeling of humility, and so would fain think itself humble, without any humiliation; it wants the luxury of penitence, of which it has read in books of religious romance, without the *pœnitentia*, the *penance*, the *pœna*, the inseparable pain that is in the idea itself, as well as in the etymology of the word. Such a feeling is the growth of religious sentimentalism; and the opposite of it, or the absence of it, whether the soul be conscious of its state or not, is what we mean by honesty of spirit,—dreading a false virtue more than a positive vice,—fearing not only to act or speak, but even to *think* a lie. Parkinson has this spiritual honesty, not as we

have laboriously analyzed it, but as belonging to the native simplicity of a very imperfect, yet unpretending, character. It is far, too, from being a something else which sometimes would ape its semblance. It is not the worse than Pharisaical spirit that loves to say :

“ I am a plain, blunt man,
That only speak right on ;

I am no hypocrite ; I make no profession ; I say no long prayers ; I fast not twice a day ; I am no church-member ; I thank God I am not like some other men, sanctimonious, bigoted, hypocritical, or even as that Pharisee.”

We do not know that the author had it distinctly in view, but the character of which we speak is there,—all the better drawn, perhaps, because he did not have it prominently in mind when he made the picture. It comes out of the other elements he has used in the composition all the more vividly, perhaps, than would have been the case had he said to himself, “ Now I will paint such a man.” Had he so designed expressly, he would doubtless have overdone,—the sketch would have been artificial and untrue. The writer has been drawn to make the picture, just as the reader has been led to see it,—from its admirable keeping, its perfect consistency with the disciplinary scenes through which his story derives its ever-sustained, harmonious interest.

A passage from the book furnishes the best possible illustration of what we mean by this spiritual honesty. Parkinson is moody, low-spirited, and inclined to be sentimental. In this state he says : —

“ I was interrupted by happy sounds from the next room. They proceeded from little Charley and Anna, who were singing together one of their Sunday-school hymns to a charming air. I had never been what is called religious. I went regularly once on Sunday to church, but was not a member. I cannot say that I had any habit of prayer, although I was a conscientious believer in the truths of our sacred religion. A sweet solemnity took possession of me ; and when they had finished, tears were in my eyes. I pressed my daughter to my heart, while now the tears flowed freely down my face. I rose and walked up and down the room. ‘ Miserable hypocrite,’ I said to myself, ‘ you are claiming for yourself to-day an exalted religious

feeling ; say rather it is a morbid sentimentality arising from disappointment in business. Hallo ! stop that ! Be a man. Do not insult your Maker with this cast-off performance. Wait awhile till things go smooth with you ; then, if you want to be pious, and good, and all that sort of thing, you can have the opportunity.' Shocked by this sudden revulsion, the idea that feelings which I regarded as sacred were nothing but a phase of low spirits threw me back on myself again. Alice was still in the room, regarding me with painful solicitude. 'Then,' I said, 'in the society of your family, in the honest determination to bear what comes with courage and fortitude, in the sifting the chaff out of yourself, and preserving what wheat remains for the harvest, — that is a better work, just at present, than indulging in a sentimental whine over your sins.' — p. 78.

It is the spiritual truthfulness rather than the false theology of this passage with which, critically, we have here to do. Mr. Kimball has a way of letting his characters talk after their own fashion, and, if they utter any sentiment at which good people might be shocked, he corrects it in a note which he inserts under the assumed title of "Editor of Memoirs." There is undoubtedly self-righteousness in what Parkinson says. There is a wrong view of God, and a mistake as to the speaker's power to recommend himself to his "Maker" by future good conduct, or in the thought that he must earn something before he can be pious. The author, or the editor, as we must call him, corrects this admirably, and most orthodoxly, in the subjoined marginal note.

"We think Mr. Parkinson unnecessarily severe with himself. That we neglect to turn to God for support until other sources fail, is no evidence that our feelings are not sincere. Although it seems ungracious to seek our Maker only after every earthly hope has perished, still this is just what HE tells us we *may* do. Doubtless, with many, their feelings will not stand the test of returning prosperity. But we have always felt that, whether genuine or not, they forcibly illustrate man's recognition of a HIGHER POWER. — *Editor of Memoirs.*"

The doctrine being thus happily corrected, we turn now to that other aspect, — its spiritual truthfulness. The speaker does not know himself, but he means to *be* and *appear*, both before God and to himself, no other than himself. What he says about a "sentimental whining over his sins" some would

regard as very irreligious, both in thought and language. "Nothing," they would say, "could be more gracious and hopeful than such a feeling of tenderness, and produced, too, by such a touching and beautiful cause,—those dear little children and their pious Sunday-school hymns." They feel utterly disappointed, shocked it may be, at the result. "Why, this was the very place to have had the man converted." It would have been then, we reply, most likely a false conversion, a sentimental cheating of himself, and an attempt to cheat his Maker. It would have made, perhaps, no better a Christian of him than Golding. He, too, might have been moved, and doubtless often was moved, by hearing children singing their Sunday-school hymns. Perhaps that was the very way in which he was converted. Even the hard Golding may have had his sentimental moods. He could be touched by the eloquent and the tender. He was fond of good preaching, doubtless, and may have been often melted into a placid Sunday-evening spirituality after listening to "the lovely song and the pleasant voice" of one who had described the beauty of the Christian life and the odiousness of Mammon. He might have had all this experience, and yet remained the hard, worldly man he was when "he took his fellow-servant by the throat, and said unto him, Pay me that thou owest." Such sentimentalities may have their value in certain aspects. They may aid religion when religion actually exists, just as the solemn music of the organ may aid worship if the worshipping spirit be previously there to receive it. But as a substitute for worship, or regarded as religion itself, they are worse than worthless. To have had Parkinson converted in this way would have made him no better a Christian, or it might have made him a very poor Christian; but, on the other hand, the seeming process, though far from being hypocritical in the gross sense of the word, might have done him a positive spiritual injury. It might have marred his native manliness,—which although fallen has still its *fair* proportions,—without imparting any heavenly grace. Whether he *ought* not to have had sterner convictions is not now the question; but he saw the shallowness, the deceptiveness, of these emotions, and he threw them away. Some may object to the author's lan-

guage, and find fault with the "sentimental whine"; but he has drawn a picture as true as it is valuable.

It is timely, moreover. These are the days of an æsthetic religionism. It is sought for its emotions. There is a truth in such a tendency which makes it all the more dangerous from its accompanying deceptiveness. We ought to be moved, we must be moved; but when emotion is sought for its own sake, it may become as selfish as the love of money, or the love of fame. We desire the spiritual luxury, and, if it comes not otherwise, it must be got up. The soul is not directly hypocritical in this; but unconsciously, almost, it seeks to be what it is not, as we have before defined the strange expression. It does not mean to present outwardly a false appearance of the spirit within,—that is the grosser and far less usual hypocrisy,—but it would make this world within look different to itself, look different to its Maker, without actually being, or becoming, what it can never be through any efforts of its own, or any self-moving spiritual life.

The cause of this strange deception is our mistaking the abstract admiration of goodness, our "assent" to it, yea, "our delight in it after the inward man," for goodness itself. All men have this admiration, and even love, of virtue,—at least in the redeemable state. Its utter loss may be the very thing which makes the great and final perdition. All men have good principles. The vilest wretch on earth is a lover of right, a sincere and hearty defender of right, when it is regarded as the antagonist, not to himself, or his selfish individuality, but to an abstract wrong. Let the worst man read a fictitious story, and he is wounded if it does not come out right. He even feels a kind of indignation, as though there had been some wrong done to him, if the good are not rewarded, and the evil punished. Such is this abstract love of truth, *per se*, that even thieves and murderers might be trusted to make a code of laws for a Utopian community. They would make good laws,—all the better, perhaps, from their larger experience of the evils most to be guarded against.

So is it, especially, in the placid contemplation of moral states. The picture is beautiful. We love it, we fancy we *are* it, when "still far wide," away off in that "region of dis-

similitude" to which Augustine compares this strange anomaly in our mysterious human nature. The celestial object is so bright, so magnified, so very near it seems, that we could almost touch it with our hands; but alas! millions of miles are but feeble measures of our real distance. Even though the enrapturing scene were near, we mistake our true position in relation to it. From the Mount of Worldliness, whereon we stand, we look over to the Mount of Holiness, as it rises before us with its vision of the Land of Beulah. We think to pass the narrow, intervening space on some gentle "bridge of sighs," or a step would take us from the one side to the other, and that step, we sometimes fancy, has been made. We think we are there, when in truth we must get down from our false height, — far down in the valley of humiliation, before we can begin to ascend the opposite hill; and then it is a steep and toilsome path,

"μακρος δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτήν."

"Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." We cannot go from evil to good but through pain, — οὐ γὰρ οἶόν τε ἄλλως ἀδικίας ἀπαλλάττεσθαι, — "for it is impossible for us to be otherwise delivered from unrighteousness," — οὐχ οἶόν τε, — it is *morally* impossible. In saying this, the wisest of the Greeks knew nothing of that great mystery, the part borne in our salvation by the sufferings of another; but he taught, even as Christ and Paul teach, that each individual, too, has his struggle. "No cross, no crown," is still the Christian's motto. It is διὰ θλίψεως, "through hard rubbing," — through "*tribulation*," — that "we enter the kingdom of God." We do not say that all other experience is false, — it does seem, sometimes, as though some men stepped placidly over without cross or conflict, — but there is danger of delusion. Some theologians maintain that, unlike things without, the *desire* of moral good is the actual *possession* of it. But it would seem to be contrary to Scripture, as well as to a true experience. It may rather be as "when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; he awaketh, and lo, he is empty, his soul is faint, he *still hath appetite*."

This sentimental pietism is deeply infecting the age, and

giving a false coloring to everything about it. It pervades our religious literature; it is in our Sunday-school books; it is poisoning the minds of our children. It is bringing in an artificial virtue, which a right mind dreads more than a positive vice, seeing that the first, aside from its own deep evil, is ever the forerunner of the second. It does not merely substitute feeling for truth, but in time destroys all that awes and restrains in doctrine, all that is strongest and deepest in emotion itself.

There is another state of soul, less emotional, less religious, some would think, but, morally and spiritually, far better, — whether we regard it as belonging to the natural man, or as coming from a supernatural grace. It is that utterance of the spirit which says: "Let me be nothing but what I am. Spiritually deformed as I may be, as something within teaches me I must be, let me appear such before my Maker, rather than seek to veil that deformity by any unreal, self-roused, or self-cherished appearances of my emotional nature. There is a luxury in such emotion, there is a seeming virtue in it; but be my soul harder than the nether millstone, drier than the sands of the desert, more sapless than the withered root, rather than have it the seat of any false feeling, however fair in appearance, or soothing in effect; let my spirit be dark as Erebus rather than be cheered by any unreal light, — cold as the iceberg, rather than warmed by any artificial heat." Is it thus cold and hard, is it thus dark and worldly, so let it lie before the Divine eye, rather than even think of any false propitiation, or the screen of any inward state that can only conceal it from itself. Be honest. It is all that man can do. It will not cure the moral deformity, but it greatly aids the true discipline; it leaves open the way of the true healing. Such a "waiting," too, "upon the Lord," may be very far from the state of spiritual indifference; such a life may be the continual presentation of the prayer, — "Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see the evil way that may be in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

But we are writing a homily instead of a criticism. There is another scene where Parkinson appears to better advantage, and with which we shall close our article. His painful years

of discipline have been bearing fruit, although he himself seems to be sinking lower and lower in the worldly scale. To the loss of property, and the loss of the commonest domestic comfort, there is, at last, added the loss of reputation. He hears whisperings of the street, the talk of men who doubt his honesty. It is the same injustice that had haunted the steps of his poor friend, Sol Downer. He thought he had given up all, and was truly submissive to the Divine will; but here is the revelation of an idol in his soul dearer than honesty itself, and he wails, like Micah of old, when that idol is taken from him. It is the crowning process of self-knowledge, and we cannot help greatly admiring the way in which Mr. Kimball presents it to us.

"The people were fast leaving the street while I stood idly looking on. My attention was at that moment excited by hearing my name pronounced in a conversation between two or three gentlemen who stood on the steps near where I was,—suspicious and sensitive, it seemed as if my hearing was doubly acute.

" 'What an old scoundrel he's got to be!' said one.

" 'That's a fact,' said another.

" 'Dear me, dear me, I can't think it possible,' added a third; 'he was always considered such an honorable man.'

" 'I can't help that,' said the first voice. 'Loomis says he's been in the Tombs all the morning,—he and Devine, for swindling; and when he found he had to be put through, the old knave planked down the cash in less than no time.' *

"Two of the voices were familiar to me. I thought especially that I recognized that of the gentleman who ventured a word in my favor, but I had no desire to satisfy myself. I did not turn round, but started swiftly for my house.

"I saw nothing, heard nothing, noticed nothing. Arriving at home, I brushed past Alice, ran up stairs to my chamber, locked and bolted the door, threw myself on the bed, and cried,—cried piteously as children cry."—p. 392.

Thus ends abruptly Chapter XV. It prepares us for the scene that follows in Chapter XVI.

"The next day was Sunday. I rose, dressed myself mechanically,

* This transaction is detailed a few pages before. Parkinson was innocent, but had been made the victim of a swindler.

and went down to breakfast. I was suffering from no sharp sensations. A dull, heavy, muffled pain, at regular intervals, took the place of the usual nervous energetic action of the heart. Literally, it seemed to be broken.

"So much were Alice and Matilda impressed by the change in me, that neither ventured to ask for an explanation. The younger children shared magnetically in the feeling. What a silent table! How different from our usual cheerfulness!

"At the proper hour we all started for church. I thought the placid face of the old clergyman looked more benevolent and tranquil than ever. 'He is at rest, at rest,' I said to myself. 'Shall I ever be at rest?'

"The services did not attract my attention, until the text was announced. It was as follows:—

"'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?'

"'My friends,' said the old minister, 'the translation of this verse from the Hebrew is not felicitous. Let me improve it by another rendering. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit,— what shall sustain *it*?" That is the question I propose to answer this morning.

"'The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity! What a statement of the power and might and pride of the human race! Ah! yes; the spirit will sustain against all infirmity; it will carry man resolute and undaunted through fire and sword; in perils by land and by water; through misfortunes and calamities; through contests, troubles, and dangers; amidst disease and pestilence; and it may even nerve him to meet death itself with composure.

"'But if a man's *spirit* falters, if the day comes when the *keepers* of the house shall tremble, if a wound is inflicted here,' (he laid his hand upon his heart,) 'what is to be done? The form of the question in the text implies that there can be no help from within. Physically, a man cannot support himself by his own weight. Neither can the spirit receive support through its own power.'

"The venerable man went on to show how only the 'FATHER of our spirits' can heal the wounds of the spirit. That it is not until a man is brought into direct communion with his MAKER, that he is armed at all points, and proof against whatever may happen.

"I have no design to give even an abstract of the discourse, but only to convey the leading, paramount idea. I listened entranced. Every word seemed prepared for me, directed towards me.

"By degrees, as he proceeded, I felt a sense of relief steal over me.

The action of the heart resumed its healthful pulsation. By a sort of instinctive effort, I ejaculated in a low tone, ‘God help me!’—pp. 393, 394.

It is best to leave such a passage to its own effect. We cannot, however, help remarking on the illustration it furnishes of much that has been given in the previous pages of this article, or moral lecture, as it might rather be called. Nothing can be more simple and touching than the narrative, but it is no sentimentalism. It stands in marked contrast with the other experience. That was but a shadow,—a surface thing; here all is real, solid, sound as Scripture and truth itself. The voice of children’s hymns, “anthems of nature,” the solemn swell of the organ, these are all very good, very profitable to the soul that has already “the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom”; they have in them a certain religiousness, or religiosity, but they are not religion. Dependence, want, and helpless ill-desert, a great perdition and a great Deliverer,—these are inseparable elements of the idea. “*God help me!*”—here all is real; in this short prayer each word is emphatic, each word contains an infinitude, either absolutely or in relation. There is the infinite height of the Helper, the infinite lowliness of the object, the infinity of need that brings them both together, in the prayer of faith on the one side, and the immeasurable condescension of the other. This is *religio*, a *binding back*, a finding of the lost, a *reunion* of the wandering spirit to Him from whom it came, and from whom it had so far and so grievously departed. The author, the critic, the reader, may fear to assert such a state as belonging to his personal experience; but we may not doubt its reality. “There is nothing in the universe,” says Archbishop Leighton, “stronger than a believing soul.” Even as a thought of the mind, it has a sublimity which no words can express. It transcends all science, all philosophy, even as it soars above our most common worldly thinking.